

STARS BACK TO STAGE

Season in Full Swing and
Players Hard at Work.

TRIUMPH FOR IRVING'S SON

Some New Plays Presented, and
Others That Have Only Been Re-
modeled—Belasco Will Try His
New One in Boston This Fall—
Latest Theatrical Gossip.

Special to The Washington Herald.

New York, Oct. 1.—At last the theatrical season here is in full swing. With the 1st of October came cooler weather and the hasty return of the sojourners in pleasant places to their haunts in the city, and the theatrical world is again governed by natural laws. If I ever expressed any wonder why New York is so peculiarly the center of gravity in the fate of theatrical enterprises, I have ceased to marvel. Nine-tenths of the population is crowded into five and six room flats, half the space of which is pitch dark, and so cramped for room that people rush to the theaters to get away from the depression of their domiciles. After you have spent the day moving about in narrow streets that resemble the canyons of Colorado and then go home to a New York flat you will feel an irresistible longing for color and light. And there you are.

The notable events at the theaters this week, and for several weeks more to come, are John Drew, in Pinero's play, "The House in Order," at the Empire; Blanche Bates, in "The Girl of the Golden West," at the Belasco; James K. Hackett, in "The Walls of Jericho," at the Hackett; Henry Arthur Jones' interesting play, "The Hypocrites," at the Hudson; Montgomery and Stone, in "The Red Mill," at the Knickerbocker; "The Lion and the Mouse," at the Lyceum; Grace George, in "Clothes," at the Manhattan; Annie Russell, as Puck, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," at the New Astor; H. B. Irving, in repertoire, at the New Amsterdam; Rose Stahl, in "The Chorus Lady," at the Savoy, and Margaret Anglin and Henry Miller, in "The Great Divide," at the Princess.

Out of forty-six theaters now open, this sums up the aggregate of the productions which are more or less new or combine artistic qualities with the magic word "success." The remainder are either second-year attractions or of an inferior order of merit.

Sir Henry Irving's son is to be credited with a personal triumph in the tragic pathos of "Paola and Francesca," by Stephen Phillips, while the play, which is in blank verse, of course, is hailed with rapture by those critics on the New York press who are easily touched by serious efforts, and with the usual levity of spirit by those of the criticaster fraternity whose early education was neglected, and who have no respect for age and no veneration for literary dignity. This young Mr. Irving, however, promises real things, and as we see him in other characters we shall probably make up our minds that we are dealing with another desirable factor in our theatrical experience.

Poor old Nat Goodwin is still laboring under that depressing handicap which has clung to his footsteps for some years now, and which seems to follow him like his shadow; for after the triumphs of David Warfield in "The Music Master," which completed its run of 108 weeks last Saturday evening with a perfect crescendo of enthusiasm and speeches by the star and his manager, the Bijou Theater has lapsed into a normal condition of apathy and indifference. In "The Genius" is excellent. He even excelled himself in some scenes and was as magnetic as ever; but the piece is wooden and loosely jointed, and his company is as wooden as the play. The whole production gives you the impression of a moderately well-played amateur performance when the star is not in his zenith.

The real substantial hit is made by Montgomery and Stone, in "The Red Mill." This is the only brand-new offering that promises to last the season on Broadway in the broad comedy line. I was amazed at the transformation of the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow, of "Wizard of Oz" memory. In this piece the two comedians are metamorphosed into dashing young New Yorkers, and with the pigments removed and the straggling of the Scarecrow sent back to the stable, the revelation is something to wonder at. These boys have been playing in mask all these years. I would have bet something pretty a year ago that they had reached the acme of their artistic sweep in "The Wizard of Oz." Now I am persuaded that they made "The Wizard of Oz" famous instead of the reverse. There is something substantial in their efforts, and I believe they are only entering on their career. The piece is a rollicking comedy by Blumson, and the music has the characteristic snapshotted and cheerful charm that we expect of Victor Herbert.

My sympathy goes out to Bertha Kalich, whose career this season has been beset by a series of discouraging vicissitudes. First, there was the legal contest over Gordin's "Kreutzer Sonata" with the management of Blanche Walsh, who claimed the right to the piece from the author, while Madame Kalich's manager showed the written conveyance of all right, title and so on from Spachner and Kersler, the managers of the Yiddish theater, who claimed that in acquiring the play from Gordin they also acquired the English-speaking stage rights.

Blanche Walsh anticipated the Kalich opening by several weeks and skimmed off the cream in satisfying public curiosity as to the merits of the piece. She was enjoined by the Kalich management, but the injunction was dissolved, and then it was Kalich's turn to be enjoined by the Walsh management. The court decided that both had the right to play "The Kreutzer Sonata."

There was really no comparison to be accurately drawn between the two performances. Blanche Walsh made a melodrama of it, Kalich a tragedy. One can take his choice, but the traditional dignity rests with the latter. The critics said the play was gawdarn and morbid. They always say that about a play in which the conventional happy ending is absent, but Maud Muller's memory would never have survived in our literature if, after that mellow summer's day, she and the judge had been married. And I always think of that quatrain of Bret Harte's parody:

If of all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are these, "It might have been,"
Still sadder far, it seems to me,
Are these: "It is, but hadn't ought to be,"
or something to that effect.

I adored Kalich in the role of the unhappy wife, and she had my sympathy up to my gorge. And now I read they have had to close the Lyric Theater because the actress had to undergo an operation for appendicitis, and the large, clamorous audiences which applied for admission Saturday afternoon and evening—it was a Jewish holiday and the whole East Side had saved up to see its idol play in English—had to be dismissed. There was almost a riot on that day, although during the better part of the engagement the public came in han-

soms and electric couples to see her work. The Lyric, in consequence, is closed this week, to be reopened next Tuesday by Virginia Harrod in Sardon's play, "The Love Letter."

"The Hypocrites" and "His House in Order" are among the substantial events of the season. Both represent the better order of play writing and have struck public fancy. You will like these plays when you see them. They have a story to tell, and it is skillfully told. Jones is never so happy as when he typifies the follies of society in one of his stage romances, and he always seems to give one his money's worth. He has again scored in this play, which is as interesting as "Mrs. Dan's Defense" and "The Liars." Both he and Pinero disregard conventional characterization in their latest, and give you something more than a frivolous form of entertainment. You go out of the playhouse with the consciousness that you have witnessed an interesting phase of life.

Judging from the notices George M. Cohan's much-heralded comedy, "Popularity," is receiving, and from the private opinions expressed in a not particularly private way about it, I judge that famous dramatist has out-Kremered Theodore Kremer in the resources of all that is absurd in trying to invade the field of satirical comedy. Pride comes before a fall, and "Popularity" is likely to prove untrue to its title. The Times printed a merciless satire on his satire, and compared the dialogue to that popular in the Arkansas bottoms, although it deals with the love of a popular young actor for a distinguished Southern girl, and in locale, at least, is somewhat above the reach to which this critic assigns its literary idiosyncrasies. It is serving as a starring vehicle for Tommy Ross, of "Checkers" fame, and the cast includes Frederick de Belleville and Florence Rockwell. This is the comedy that Cohan wrote for Nat Goodwin, and which that comedian declined with thanks, whereat we had one of the characteristic funny explosions to which the character play is subject, which he cast aside all regard for Goodwin's gray hairs and lampooned him in a way that made one wonder if the boys of to-day have any respect at all for old age. Goodwin stood it like a stoic, but I imagine his audience must have dissolved under the asstringent which the critics injected into their reviews on Tuesday morning.

Alice Jeffrey, the English comedienne, who appeared in the all-star cast of "London Assurance" in Washington a little over a year ago, and who ventured upon her second starring tour in New York this season in "The Dear Unfair Sex," has closed her engagement, and very quickly the lights went out last Monday at the theater where she appeared. The play was not up to standard, and in spite of her good work—and she is an excellent actress—the engagement was unremunerative. W. H. Crane and she are to join hands in a fine production of "She Stoops to Conquer." Crane is not settling the world alive in "The Price of Money," and his stellar conjunction was hit upon as a happy expedient to let both of a temporary embarrassment, superinduced by an overdose of indifferent vehicles.

Mrs. Fiska, who has been rehearsing for three weeks the play which is to succeed "Leah Kleschna" this season, took Milwaukee, where the new piece is to be tried. It is from the pen of Langdon Mitchell, and is a satirical comedy on contemporaneous life in the metropolis, called "The New York Idea."

I saw her leading man, John Mason, at the stage door of the theater where the rehearsals were under way, smoking a cigarette and catching a breath of fresh air between scenes, and he said he looked back with much pleasure to his summer engagement at the Columbia Theater with the Guy Standing Stock Company, and to his canoe trips on the Potomac. It was the first stock engagement he had played in years—he used to be a member of the old Boston Stock Company in his earlier days—and he said he liked it because the association was pleasant and the Washington people were charming.

Belasco is to depart from his usual custom this year in bringing his new play to Washington, and Boston will have the honor instead. The reason is not that he loves Boston more and Washington less, but the difficulty in arranging his dates. Mrs. Carter's defection compelled him to delay his annual production, and he made he cannot get ready in time to fill the week originally assigned him by the booking agents, and no later date fitting in with his plans is available. Although there is a restless energy at headquarters over getting the new production ready, no one has yet received an inkling as to what his new play is about. All that any one knows is that he began work on it as soon as he decided to break his business relations with Mrs. Carter, and he is so far advanced upon it that preparations are being made to produce it some time next month.

FRED F. SCHRADER.

"Julie Bonbon" to Be Seen Here.
"Julie Bonbon," the comedy written especially by Clara Lipman for her husband, Louis Mann, contains four acts. The first is a fashionable millinery establishment on Fifth avenue, New York, presided over by Julie Bonbon. The locale of the second act is the library in the home of one of New York's richest families. What is said to be the strongest act takes place at Little Hungary, a famous Bohemian cafe on the East Side. The last act is the home of Jean Potjol (Louis Mann) and his daughter, Julie. The scenes are masterpieces of stage art, and the production is lavish even for the Shubert Brothers. "Julie Bonbon," with its same cast and production as seen for six months in New York, and in this city last spring, will be seen at the Belasco for one week, beginning Monday, October 15.

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THIS WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS.

A Washington audience will have the first view of the new comic opera, "The Girl and the Governor," to be produced at the New National Theater tonight by Jefferson de Angelis and a company which includes Miss Estelle Wentworth, Miss Maude Leakey, Miss Lillian Rhoads, and Messrs. Richie Ling and H. Vogel. Mr. S. M. Brenner, of Baltimore, wrote the book of the new opera, and Julian Edwards composed the score, which is a guarantee that the music will be found tuneful and lively.

The scene of the opera is laid in a Spanish settlement in South America during the sixteenth century, which gives ample opportunity for picturesque costuming and setting. Don Pasquale de Mosquita is the governor, and his audacious adventures form the groundwork of the story, in which Mr. De Angelis returns to the field in which he won such fame in the earlier years of his successful career. The company which supports him numbers more than seventy-five people, and it is promised that the production will be admirably staged, and presented with spirit and every attention to detail. There are some excellent voices among the leading members of the cast, several of whom have scored distinguished successes in light opera and musical comedy. Mr. De Angelis himself has long been a prime favorite with American audiences, and is a real genius for extracting a maximum of fun from the situations created for him by his authors. There will be matinees at the New National on Wednesday and Saturday this week.

"Mrs. Temple's Telegram," to be presented at the Belasco this week is a farcical play in three acts, written by Frank Hyatt. Its complications are brought about through the efforts of John Temple to convince his wife that the night previous to the beginning of the play he had been imprisoned in a lofty car on the Ferris wheel, and compelled to remain there until morning. When she refused to believe him, he determined that so long as she expects him to lie, he will, and he tells her that in point of fact he spent the night at the home of a friend, after they had missed the last car. When she asks the name and address of the friend, he manufactures both. The man's name is John Brown, and he lives in Pickleton-on-the-Thames. The wife thereupon wires John Brown, and asks him to call. The husband discovers the telegram, and hides the secret to his best friend, who happens in and agrees to impersonate Brown. This arrangement progresses satisfactorily until the real Brown appears, with a real Mrs. Brown, and it transpires that a lady who had been locked in the Ferris wheel car with Temple was none other than the wife of the friend. The usual third act explanations clear up the tangle. A voice of experience says well-known players as Harry Conner, Sadie Martinot and others, are responsible to a large degree for the enthusiastic reception that this farce is being nightly accorded.

At the Columbia this week the play will be "The Clansman," which has excited so much discussion wherever it has been seen since its production last season, when a Washington audience had its first view of it. As is well known, the story deals with the negro problem in the South, and possesses strong comedy elements, as well as others of the most serious nature. It will be presented by a strong company with fine stage setting, and we no doubt renew the interest which it aroused last season. There will be matinees on Thursday and Saturday.

Classe's this week presents the Orpheum Show, the famed touring polite vaudeville organization, which this season includes the foreign mystery, "Menetekel," the mystic handwriting ball that furnishes a modern parallel of the scriptural miracle at the feast of Belshazzar. This will be the principal feature of the bill at Classe's this week. The supplementary leading novelty will be Nava Aymar and "The Rain-Dears," a musical and mythical extravaganza devised for the recent New York summer roof garden season. Miss Aymar is reinforced by an octette of vivacity and grace. Extraordinary electrical effects have been introduced, and the finale is a realistic rainstorm. Walter Kelly, the dialect comedian, will present "The Virginia Jugglers," Four Nightingales, Olympian gymnasts and posers; Jessie, "The wonder monkey;" Claude and Fannie Usher, in the slang classic, "A Tough Love;" Work and Over, English eccentric comedians, and the motion pictures of "The Tomboys" are the other numbers on the attractive bill.

"When Knighthood Was in Flower," the dramatization of Charles Major's famous romance, will be the bill at the Majestic this week, with the usual matinees on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday. Miss Anna Day takes the leading part, supported by a good company that can be relied on to give an adequate presentation of the fascinating story. Alfred Stevens takes the part of the hero. Ogden Stevens will be seen in the part of King Hal.

The Academy will present to its patrons this week the comedy drama, "A Rocky Road to Dublin," by Charles L. Hart, which is said to be an exceptionally well-written play of unconventional type and full of interest that will appeal to intelligent people. Barney Gilmore will appear in the role of the hero, Robert Daley, which gives him full opportunity to display his talents to the best advantage. Frank Lavarnie will be seen as a breezy American, George Hassell, John D. Griffin, Will Long, Isid Maynard, Mima Shirley, Leslie Laseur, and Emily Green are also members of the company.

The Fay Foster Company will furnish the theme for the afternoon and evening at the Lyceum this week. It is well known to the patrons of this house, and is said to be stronger than ever in vaudeville talent.

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